



The Den . . . In Focus



First Street Project Update

www.1stStreetSTC.org

The completion of demolition and property clearing on five City-owned properties that lined First Street is just the first of all the activity that will soon be taking place downtown. There is much progress to report, as City staff and the developer continue to work diligently to ensure compliance with all regulations and the

completion of a redevelopment agreement for the project. Financial analysis continues to show that the project is feasible, and with progression toward the redevelopment agreement, the City is preparing to issue bonds as part of its financing plan for the project.

As of this printing, the City has received First Street Development LLC's applications and drawings as part of its Planned Unit Development submittal. The receipt of these pieces is key, as it allows staff to continue their review of the project and sets in motion a series of public reviews and hearings. For this particular project, this submittal is an important step as it takes all the properties into account, not just those being designed and built by First Street Development LLC.

Since the Concept Plan stage, where the developer submitted initial elevations and plans, the architect for the developer has worked to incorporate comments made by the City and stakeholders who made comments at public forums. Much progress has also been made in the design of other buildings that are part of the First Street Project, including the former Manor Restaurant and the Blue Goose. The site of the former Manor Restaurant, now owned by Joe Salas and Maurice McNally, will be transformed into a mixed-use building offering restaurant and office space. The Blue Goose will retain its traditional look and feel, but it will be relocated across the street and slightly further south on First Street (off Indiana).

The First Street Project started with the desire to locate additional parking downtown—and the planned parking deck is still a major component driving this project. The City will receive funding from the Federal

Transit Administration (FTA), which will be paid out over four years and applied to construction costs. In order to receive this funding, staff had to seek an agency to sponsor the funding flowing from the FTA. In June, the City reached a tentative agreement with Metra to act as the sponsor. During City and developer reviews of the parking deck design, all parties determined that an additional access point for the garage would prove beneficial for access and flow of traffic. The developer has redrawn the plans to reflect this change.

City staff and Bob Rasmussen of First Street Development LLC recently met with staff from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to review plans and next steps in the process

**First Street
Construction
Celebration
Sept. 6, 5:30 p.m.**

for environmental remediation to be performed in the project area. The City will be ordering additional testing of several areas and submitting a final proposal of remediation to the IEPA. In another coordination process with a state agency, the City is awaiting a response on its application for amendment of the floodway along the Fox River, which impacts buildings on First Street. The application is currently being reviewed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and subsequently the City anticipates approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Proceeding in anticipation of the signing of a redevelopment agreement, design for public infrastructure has been completed and the City will now begin the bid process for work to be completed. Staff anticipates that the City Council will award bids in August and work will begin immediately. Public improvements will be made in the areas of electric, sewer, streets, and water. Other projects that will become public components include a public plaza and riverwalk. First Street Development LLC has recently contracted with a landscape architect, who has done some preliminary

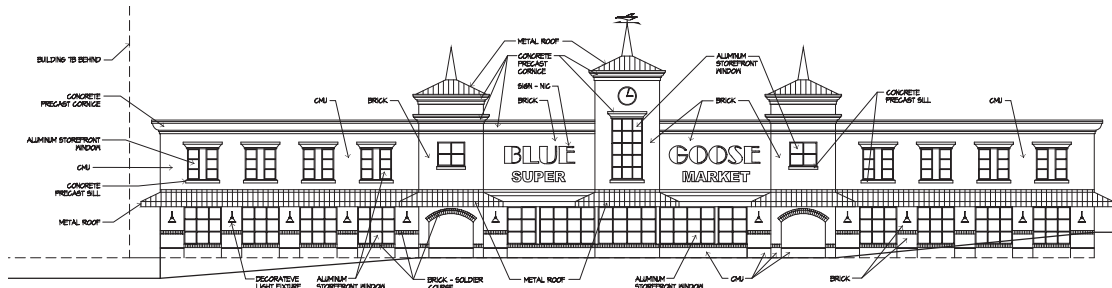
designs for the riverwalk and will also be planning the planters for sidewalks along First Street. In all planning, making First Street a pedestrian-friendly area that is easily accessible and aesthetically pleasing is an important goal.

In June, the City hosted a series of focus groups with downtown business owners and managers, in order to better understand ways to improve communications to these stakeholders during the construction

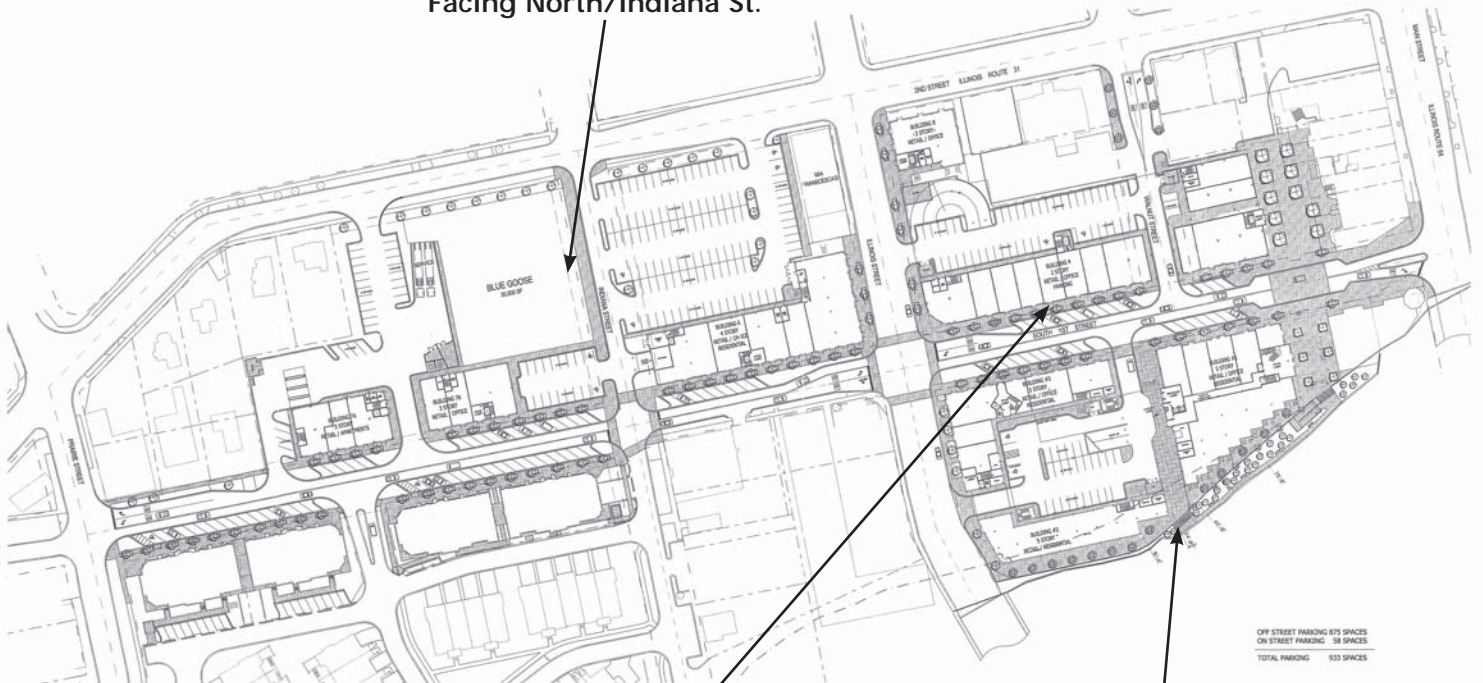
of this project. In total, there were 46 participants in the focus groups, and over 40 people received personal or phone interviews to offer their feedback. A report of all information gathered during the course of the groups and interviews will be compiled and a presentation made to the Government Operations Committee on August 7. Early on, facilitators indicate that participants offered much information and many suggestions that will be useful

for the City in approaching its communications on the project.

Plans for a celebration to mark the kickoff of the First Street Project are underway. The event will be held September 6, 5:30 p.m., in the parking lot on the corner of 1st and Walnut Streets. Attendees may take a tour of the site, view drawings and plans, pick up information on the project and talk with City staff members and the developer.



Facing North/Indiana St.



Facing East/First St.



Facing East/Fox River

